

Claims:

1. A single-phase topical liquid or semi-solid pharmaceutical composition substantially free of ethanol and water which comprises an ascomycin in a carrier vehicle comprising a 3-component solvent mixture amounting to at least 40 % w/w of the total weight of the composition and consisting of:
 - i) a C₃₋₈ alkanol and/or C₁₋₈ alkanediol;
 - ii) a fatty alcohol; and
 - iii) a further solvent selected from:
 - a) an alkane carboxylic acid alkyl ester and/or alkane dicarboxylic acid alkyl ester and/or
 - b) a hydrophilic co-component and/or
 - c) a triglyceride;and optionally further conventional excipients.
2. A composition according to claim 1 wherein the ascomycin is pimecrolimus.
3. A composition according to claim 1 or 2 wherein
 - component i) is isopropanol and/or hexylene glycol;
 - component ii) is oleyl alcohol; and
 - component iii) is:
 - a) diisopropyl adipate and/or isopropyl myristate and/or
 - b) dimethyl isosorbide and/or
 - c) medium-chain triglycerides;and optionally further conventional excipients.
4. A composition according to claim 1 or 2 comprising further conventional excipients selected from hydroxypropyl cellulose, liquid paraffin, colloidal silicon dioxide, bee wax and hydrogenated castor oil.
5. A composition according to claim 1 or 2 wherein the ascomycin is present in an amount of 1 % to 5 % by weight of the composition.

6. A composition according to claim 1 or 2 which is in the form of a gel, a foam or an ointment.
7. A composition according to claim 1 or 2 for use in the treatment of inflammatory and hyperproliferative skin diseases and of cutaneous manifestations of immunologically-mediated diseases.
8. A method for treating inflammatory and hyperproliferative skin diseases or cutaneous manifestations of immunologically-mediated diseases comprising administering a composition according to claim 1 or 2 to the skin of a patient in need thereof.
9. Use of a composition according to claim 1 or 2 in the preparation of a medicament for the treatment of inflammatory and hyperproliferative skin diseases and of cutaneous manifestations of immunologically-mediated diseases.
10. Use of a carrier vehicle as defined in claim 1 to enhance penetration of an ascomycin into human skin, nail or mucosa.